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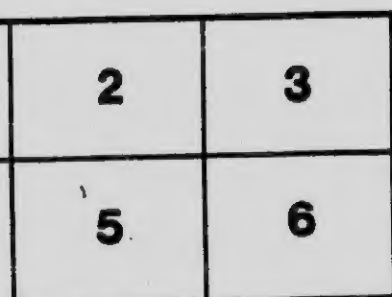
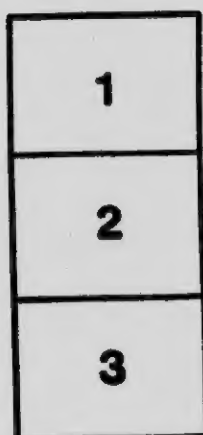
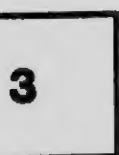
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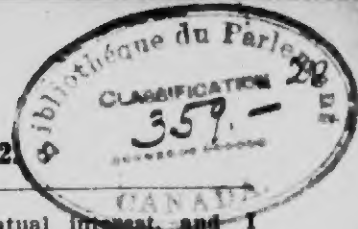
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From the Gazette, Montreal, Tuesday, October 8, 1912

NO NEED FOR PANIC OR ALARM

Pronouncements of Highest
Officials of British Govern-
ment and Admiralty.

GREAT SPLASH HARMFUL

"Methodical, Steady and Tire-
less Naval Development."
the Cause Churchill
Pleads for.

To the Editor of The Gazette:

Sir,—A careful examination of the reports of recent debates in the English Houses of Parliament will furnish convincing evidence that the members of the present British Government and their expert advisers of the Admiralty are clearly of opinion that the British navy is still supreme upon the seas and competent for all political or other exigencies which can at present reasonably be foreseen. If a majority of the people of Great Britain believed otherwise, it would have been impossible for the Asquith Government to have lived through the recent session; while, as a matter of fact, no effective efforts were made by the Opposition to challenge the Government's policy with respect to naval developments.

The "German Scare," which has been somewhat artificially and altogether adroitly created in Canada, finds meagre, if any, support in the official declarations of responsible English ministers of the Crown.

On July 10, Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary, in a lengthy statement to the House of Commons regarding England's foreign relations, said:—

"Our relations with the German Government at the present moment are excellent. (Cheers.) We are perfectly frank with each other about all

questions of mutual interest, and I believe that when questions come up, whether they be, for instance, in connection with our respective interests in South Africa, or whether they be in connection eventually with the Baghdad Railway, both governments are convinced that their mutual interests can be perfectly reconciled."—Times, July 11, 1912.

Speaking in the Commons on July 25 ultimo, on Imperial defence, Mr. Asquith, prime minister, declared:—

"Our relations with the great German Empire are, I am glad to say, at this moment—and I feel sure are likely to remain—relations of amity and goodwill. (Cheers.) My noble friend, Lord Haldane, the present Lord Chancellor, paid a visit to Berlin early in the year. He entered upon conversations and an interchange of views there which have been continued since in a spirit of perfect frankness and friendship, both on one side or the other, and in which I am glad to say we now have the advantage of participation of a very distinguished diplomatist in the person of the German Ambassador. (Hear, hear.)"—Times, July 26, 1912.

Mr. Bonar Law, leader of the Opposition, following Mr. Asquith, said:

"I am quite sure that if this country really believed that there was danger they would refuse no possible sacrifice which the Government could ask. (Cheers.) But in spite of all that has been said, does the country, do the House of Commons, do any of us really believe that there is danger and vital danger? (Cries of 'No, no.') I confess that I have the greatest difficulty in believing it myself—(ministerial cheers)—I confess it."—Times, July 26, 1912.

It is true that Mr. Bonar Law proceeded to argue that "this country has never been in a position of greater peril," but as England has never really been in peril, his expression may have meant less than would at first appear. It is sufficient for my present purpose, to note that no member on the ministerial benches appeared to give the slightest credence to Mr. Bonar Law's suggestions of peril, and that even he practically admitted that the country did not really believe such suggestions well founded. Perhaps the best evidence of the confidence of England is that in recent electoral contests in that country the alleged "German menace" and the naval question generally have scarcely been referred to, by the respective candidates.

The reason why the English electors are not convinced that there is a serious peril now imminent is doubt-

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less due to their belief in the truth of the statements of responsible members of their Government, who are or should be thoroughly informed of the facts.

On July 2nd, on the eve of the arrival of the Canadian Ministers in London, a debate occurred in the House of Lords upon the Naval position in the Mediterranean, when, speaking officially on behalf of the Government, Lord Crewe said:—

"So far as our existing position in any part of the world is concerned we are not afraid to declare that we consider the security of the country is achieved."—Times July 3, 1912.

And proceeding to explain the basis of this emphatic declaration, Lord Crewe added:—

"Taking March 31 of this year, we find that we have 16 battleships and battle cruisers of the Dreadnought type, as against 15 possessed by all the other powers in European waters. Next year we shall have 24 ships of this type as against 21 possessed by all the other naval powers in Europe. These battleships represent a distinct margin over the two-power standard."—Times, July 3, 1912.

Possessing two Dreadnoughts for each and every one owned by all European powers, the Englishman reads with a degree of complacency what he believes to be the exaggerated statements of a few uninformed politicians occupying the Opposition benches.

Earl Brassy, who is admittedly informed in regard to Naval matters, followed with a protest against limiting the comparison to battleships, saying:—

"The cruisers should not be omitted. In all types, and especially the most powerful types, we had an overwhelming preponderance . . . The German North Fleet had no ships to set against our armored cruisers . . . If we steadily built the ships we required, alarmists would be silenced and international relations improved."—Times, July 3, 1912.

On July 4th, when the Army estimates were under discussion in the House of Commons, Colonel Seely, Secretary for War, discussing the possibility of a foreign invasion of England, referred to the enormously superior naval power of Great Britain, as follows:—

"In the light of some of the considerations he had mentioned, the difficulties were likely to be such that a large force could not be landed upon these shores unless and until we had lost command of the sea; and he refused to contemplate the possibility of our losing the command of the sea, with the enormously superior power we had and which he thought we must always enjoy. Whatever Gov-

ernment was in power, it must be its duty to maintain our command of the sea, seeing it was by that we lived."—Times, July 5, 1912.

On July 22nd, Mr. Churchill, submitted to Parliament the Government's supplementary naval estimates and gave an exhaustive review of the naval situation. In reference to the comparative strength of the British Navy, he said:—

"I hope I shall not be pressed to enter into any process of comparison of the individual ships and squadrons of this country with those of any foreign power. Such comparisons would be irritating and invidious to others, and it is very likely that by revealing our own views they might prove injurious to us . . . I hope it will be sufficient for me to say that the arrangements proposed will, in the opinion of the Admiralty, be adequate for the needs of 1914 and 1915"

"I am content to say, basing myself as I must do in these matters upon the advice and opinion of the naval authorities on whom the Government rely, that we consider the arrangements described not only the best possible in the circumstances, but satisfactory in themselves so far as the next two or two and a half years are concerned. The time has not yet come to provide for the latter part of the financial year 1915-16."

"The policy I have submitted to the Committee this afternoon is the policy of the Admiralty, which we ourselves have steadily developed and pursued and in which we have confidence. On behalf of the Admiralty I shall ask for nothing that is not necessary, and I have asked for nothing that I have not got."—Times, July 23, 1912.

In the same debate Mr. Asquith, Prime Minister, stated most emphatically:—

"I deprecate anything in the nature of panic or scare. I do not think there is the least occasion for it, but it is of the utmost importance that we should see clearly what is likely to happen, and that we should provide in time for our own part in the discharge of our own responsibilities. There never has been a moment and there is not now when we have not been overwhelmingly superior in naval force against any combination which could reasonably be anticipated. But I entirely agree. We must maintain that position and maintain it to the full." (Cheers).

And then Mr. Asquith proceeded to repudiate most emphatically the suggestion that the Government were cutting their future programme for ship-building rather fine. He said:—

"I have maintained the opinion in this House and elsewhere, that it is a very great mistake in such a shifting



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art as naval shipbuilding . . . to make your provisions too far in advance, or you may find you are left with ships that are obsolete, out of date, and which are not really fit for the growing requirements and exigencies of naval warfare, in which case you will have lost your money and will have to spend it over again in having to provide substitutes. There are many illustrations of that in our past naval history and I should be sorry that we should repeat that experiment.

"But, the House may feel assured that when we produce our estimates next year, we shall not fall short of anything our advisers think necessary to fully and adequately safeguard British interests in the Mediterranean and elsewhere." (Cheers).—Times, July 23, 1912.

On July 24th, the naval question was again under discussion in the House of Lords, and again Lord Crewe, speaking on behalf of the Government, reviewed the whole situation and combatted the idea that more Dreadnoughts are now necessary. He said in part:—

"We are entitled to ask at what point is this demand for absolute preponderance to stop. It is quite conceivable that the time may come when eight Dreadnoughts in the Mediterranean, altogether apart from the fleet in home waters, may give no great preponderance over potential adversaries. In the year 1915 there will be seven Dreadnoughts belonging to various states in the Mediterranean. If we are to consider every possible country as our potential enemy and scarcely one as our probable friend, it seems to me impossible to argue on that basis. Putting the case in that way you can produce the most blood-curdling combinations which could possibly be conceived. . . .

"There are other considerations. If you hurry on your programme to the utmost extent, you lose the benefit of the continued improvements possible in design and almost certain in construction and armaments.

"There is another thing. If you come forward with a great splash of a programme, you help to bring about the particular evil which you wish to avoid, because the people to whom you announce that you are building against them are positively spurred on to the acceleration and possibility to the enlargement of their programme. To that extent you tend to defeat your own object.

"It is true that next year, in view of the maritime strength of the world, three, four or five years hence, it will be necessary to look facts once more in the face. I cannot, however, admit that the Government are run-

ning it too fine in this matter, because I cannot conceive a condition of affairs for dealing with which the margin of time is not sufficient for our purpose. . . .

"I would ask the House to consider that even if we cannot follow the Noble Earl (Selborne) in his programme or in some of the views he has expressed as to the necessities of the case, we are as fully alive as he can be to the necessity of maintaining impregnable the defence of this country, sharing the belief that such a defence is the surest guarantee of the peace of the world."—Times, July 25, 1912

On the same day, July 24th, the House of Commons went into Committee of Supply on the Navy estimates. To the suggestion that the provision which the Government were making was inadequate, Mr. Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, expressed the "absolute confidence" of the Government in the adequacy of their programme, and laid particular stress upon "the great material advantage of never laying down a ship till the last moment compatible with full security," in view of the rapidity with which the types of ships became obsolete. "That," he said, amid the cheers of the House, "is my answer to the hon. gentleman below the gangway who is urging the immediate construction of new ships before the moment when the best designs can be completed."

Proceeding to details as to the Government's programme for the construction of dreadnoughts, Mr. Churchill said:

"Perhaps I may tell the committee what our forecast is in regard to dreadnought construction. We expect in the fourth quarter of 1913 to have 18 dreadnought battleships by the time that Germany has 13. In the fourth quarter of 1914 we shall have 24 and Germany will have 16, according to our calculations. In the fourth quarter of 1915 we shall have 27 and Germany 17. I am leaving the cruisers out. I am not counting the two Lord Nelsons, although those vessels are counted as dreadnoughts by the French, and certainly are vessels of very great merit and power. The House will see, looking at these figures, which omit cruisers, and just give battleships, that the statement that we have only a margin of four ships in the North Sea does require to be qualified by a good many other observations."

In answer to an enquiry as to the number of battle-cruisers omitted from his previous statement, Mr. Churchill said:

"We shall have eight battle-cruisers

when Germany has four in the fourth quarter of 1913. In the fourth quarter of 1914 we shall have nine when Germany has five, and in the fourth quarter of 1915 we shall have ten when Germany has six, and those are the total figures."

Declaring that "until 1915 has been reached the situation will be perfectly satisfactory," Mr. Churchill proceeded:

"It has been stated that I have described the dangers with which we are menaced, and that I am nevertheless doing nothing to meet them.

"We are spending 45 millions sterling this year. Is that nothing? We are going to spend more next year. Is that nothing. We are raising the personnel of the navy from 133,850—that is what it stood at on March 31, 1912—to 141,150—that is what we hope it will reach on March 31, 1913. Then we propose to raise the number to 146,000 at the end of 1914—another rise of 5,000 men—and there will be further increases in the future. We are creating an immediate reserve, which has already reached 2,000, and which we hope next year will reach 5,000, in order to be able to man this extra squadron.

"Look at new construction. This year Germany has laid down two new ships; we are laying down four. Next year, we are told, Germany is going to lay down one extra ship; we are going to lay down two extra ships. Is that nothing? This year Germany has laid down two small cruisers; we are laying down eight, not quite so large, but much faster. We are accelerating the construction of these eight vessels. It is true that this year Germany is accelerating the construction of 12 destroyers; we have accelerated the construction of 20 destroyers. In the course of the next 18 months it is expected that the German fleet will be reinforced by 21 destroyers. We shall be reinforced by 43 destroyers in the same period.

"The main principle of the German Navy Law is the creation of a third battle squadron which will be gradually developed and become perfected towards the end of 1914. We have already created our new squadron. It is in full existence. We are told that it is foreseeing the danger but taking no steps to meet it. Such statements defeat themselves. I do not think extreme statements are at all likely to serve the cause of methodical, steady and tireless naval development, which is the cause I stand here to plead.

"Lord Selborne yesterday demanded the new construction of eight dreadnoughts. I do not know that if eight dreadnoughts were to be newly constructed at a cost of 20 millions it

would be possible to man and officer them by the time they were ready, unless you were prepared to lay on the scrap-heap or to put in a very low grade ships which are quite good enough to do the work they will have to do at the dates named. With all my pride in the great service I have the honor to represent in this House, I should not feel the slightest pleasure in being charged with the duty of adding eight more dreadnoughts to our naval construction at the present moment. I could not come before the House of Commons and say, as I can say to you, that every penny we have in the estimates at present I believe to be necessary for the security of the state.

"We have the situation well in hand. There is no need whatever for panic or alarm. It is entirely our own fault if we are not able to produce at the different dates in future the margin necessary for our security. We believe if our recommendations are accepted by the House and the ample provision we are asking for is granted by the House we shall have an adequate margin of security for our purposes in 1914, and in 1915 we shall be no worse off than in 1914. In 1916 there will be a slight upward tendency in the proportion of ships we shall have. No new development which can effect 1914 can take place now and any new development which affects 1915 or 1916 can be dealt with effectively when it makes itself known. (Cheers.)"—The Times, July 25, 1912.

The positive official declarations which I have quoted above categorically affirm:—

1. That the political relations between Great Britain and Germany are excellent.

2. That, even if those relations were not relations of amity and good will, Great Britain enjoys "enormously superior power" upon the North Sea; and moreover is, to use the words of Prime Minister Asquith, "overwhelmingly superior in naval force against any combination which could reasonably be anticipated."

3. That an increasing superiority of British naval strength is now assured till 1916.

4. That the British Government, in next year's naval estimates, will supply all the moneys that the British Admiralty think necessary to fully and adequately safeguard British interests.

5. That "a great splash of a programme" is not only not necessary, but would "help to bring about the particular evil which you wish to avoid."

6. That to make greater haste in construction must result in waste of public funds; and that even the

British Government cannot conceive a condition of affairs for dealing with which "the margin of time is not sufficient for our purpose."

7. That, in fact, the British Government has the situation well in hand and "there is no need whatever for panic or alarm."

Such are the pronouncements of the highest officials of the Government and of the Admiralty of Great Britain. Is it any wonder that the people of Great Britain refuse to take alarm at the suggestion of politicians out of office, who are unable on the floors of Parliament to make good their querulous complaints? The people of Great Britain are confident that their Government has made, is making and will make adequate provision to maintain British naval supremacy. That Government is exclusively responsible to the electors of Great Britain!

Only five years ago, the Prime Minister of England, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, declared at the Imperial Conference of 1907, that:—

"The cost of naval defence, and the responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs hang together."

And so long as the British electorate is content with their Government's conduct of foreign affairs, and with the ample provision made by their Government for their naval defence, why should Canadians attempt, by free gifts of their public funds, to express want of confidence in the British Government, which is not responsible to us, or seek to make up an alleged deficiency in British naval construction, when the British Government and their experts of the Admir-

alty so positively declare that no such deficiency really exists?

I do not desire to say one word against Canada contributing her full share to the naval defence of the British Empire on conditions consistent with equality of citizenship and proportionate participation by Canada in the control and conduct of Imperial affairs and international relations. But that is a problem to be worked out patiently and intelligently in the face of difficulties, due chiefly to the clearly disclosed desire of the executive of the British Government to retain, as firmly as ever, their own exclusive control.

On July 22nd Mr. Churchill stated in the House of Commons that "Mr. Borden and his colleagues are now in possession of all the facts, and we have discussed with the utmost freedom and confidence the action which should be taken, and the way of surmounting the difficulties which obstruct such action."

It is inconceivable that any of the facts made known to the Canadian ministers should be inconsistent with the official statements above quoted. If so, there is no reason for immoderate haste, and there is every reason why any contribution that Canada may undertake, while commensurate with our wealth and consistent with our self-respect, should also be made on a basis that shall ensure popular approval in this country and regular and continuous Canadian support for the maintenance of the naval supremacy of the Empire of which we form a part.

C. J. CAHAN.

Montreal, October 3, 1912.



